

ARTICLE APPEARED
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9 September 1983**JACK ANDERSON****Reagan Getting
Some Ill Advice
On Middle East**

President Reagan should fire the people who have been fashioning his Middle East policy before he gets mired any deeper in the shifting sands. They have misread events at every turn.

It's not that the policy-makers received bad intelligence; the secret warnings were clear but ignored.

Warnings that went unheeded:

- Reagan promised Lebanon's Amin Gemayel that the U.S. Marines would remain on the scene until the Lebanese army could take over. The White House put out the cheery assessment that this should be no more than a year. But a year ago, intelligence reports warned the Lebanese army was in far worse shape than anyone had imagined.

- Reagan assured Congress formally that the Marines would not become involved in hostilities. Yet, he was forewarned that the Marines could not avoid casualties.

- As far back as March 6, 1981, a CIA analysis warned that Israeli incursions into Lebanon were "inevitable" and that a large-scale invasion was likely.

- Once the Israelis crossed into Lebanon, strategists advised the president to let them clean out the Palestine Liberation Organization underground and to install a stable Lebanese government. Instead, Reagan listened to advisers who warned that the United States would "forfeit all influence" in Lebanon if the Lebanese "remain solely dependent on Israeli support." As a result, Lebanon is a U.S. protectorate that Reagan is reluctant to protect.

- When Reagan offered his "peace initiative" for the Middle East last year, he counted on the crucial support of Jordan's King Hussein. He went ahead with the plan despite intelligence warnings that the king would decline the honor. The reports were right, and Reagan wound up looking foolish.

- Reagan also misjudged Syria's Hafez Assad, who was expected to end his long occupation of eastern Lebanon if the Israelis could be persuaded to withdraw. Yet, my reading of intelligence reports led me to warn on April 29, "The Syrians will try to remain in Lebanon after Israeli troops and international peacekeeping forces agree to pull out."

- At the same time that Reagan's advisers were telling him Assad was a reasonable ruler, intelligence reports warned that he was conspiring with Arab extremists and Soviet suppliers. The Soviets were trying to precipitate a Syrian-Israeli military

clash that could catch the U.S. Marines in the cross fire, a February, 1983, report added. Now the White House acknowledges that these reports were true.

- A Jan. 4, 1983, secret dispatch from Damascus reported that "U.S. intelligence community believes Syria is preparing at least two sites for surface-to-air missiles of type SA5." These top-of-the-line missiles never before deployed outside the Soviet Union, are now in Syria. They have a 150-mile range, which is enough to sweep the Lebanese skies.

- Assad's conniving with the most radical elements of the PLO has been known to U.S. intelligence for at least a year.

- U.S. intelligence agencies received warnings a month in advance that Iranian-backed terrorists, apparently with Syrian connivance, planned to bomb the American Embassy in Beirut. Yet nothing was done to beef up security.

What are the latest intelligence warnings from Lebanon? The assessment is that Assad believes he can drive the Americans and Israelis out of Lebanon by inflicting a few casualties. He is expected, therefore, to continue encouraging the attacks on U.S. and Israeli positions.

As pressure mounts on the Americans and Israelis to leave, Gemayel's government will fall, I predict, and will be replaced by a pro-Syrian, pro-Soviet government.